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All persons are by nature free and independent, and have certain natural and unalienable rights, among which are those of enjoying and defending life and liberty, of acquiring, possessing, and protecting property, and of pursuing and obtaining safety and happiness.

-- Article 1, Section 1, New Jersey State Constitution

Debunking the 'stand your ground' myth

By David Kopel

Whatever happened on the night that George Zimmerman shot Trayvon Martin, we know one thing for sure: The gun prohibition lobbies and the compliant media have been deceiving the public about Florida's laws. Among the many deceptions is the claim that Florida's "stand your ground" law affects the legality of whatever Mr. Zimmerman did.

The assertion that Florida law allows shooting whenever someone believes it to be necessary is a flat-out lie. The actual law of Florida is that "a person is justified in the use of deadly force" if "(1) He or she reasonably believes that such force is necessary to prevent imminent death or great bodily harm to himself or herself or another or to prevent the imminent commission of a forcible felony" (Florida Statutes, Section 776.012).

The second part of the law provides special provisions for self-defense against violent home invaders or carjackers. Neither of those is relevant to the Zimmerman case.

If the factual claims of Trayvon's supporters are true, Mr. Zimmerman criminally attacked Trayvon and killed him, while having no reasonable belief that Trayvon was perpetrating a forcible felony, or imminently about to kill or gravely wound Mr. Zimmerman. So Florida's self-defense laws simply would not apply, since Mr. Zimmerman would have no right under Florida law to use deadly force.

Florida's rule that deadly force may be used to prevent "imminent death or great bodily harm" or "the imminent commission of a

forcible felony" is the norm throughout the United States.

Like most states, Florida does not mandate that victims of a violent crime attempt to retreat before they defend themselves. The retreat rule is irrelevant, regardless of whether you believe Trayvon's advocates or Mr. Zimmerman's advocates.

According to one side, Mr. Zimmerman was the criminal aggressor. Thus, he would have no self-defense rights at all. According to the other side, Trayvon attacked Mr. Zimmerman, knocked him to the ground, got on top of him and continued the attack. So Mr. Zimmerman would have had no ability to retreat. Either way, the retreat rules for lawful defenders have nothing to do with this case.

Despite what the gun prohibition lobbies claim, the no-retreat rule has deep roots in traditional American law. At the Supreme Court, the rule dates back to the 1895 case of *Beard v. United States*, in which the great Justice John Harlan wrote for a unanimous court that the victim "was not obliged to retreat, nor to consider whether he could safely retreat, but was entitled to stand his ground, and meet any attack upon him with a deadly weapon, in such a way and with such force as, under all the circumstances, he, at the moment, honestly believed, and had reasonable grounds to believe, were necessary to save his own life, or to protect himself from great bodily injury."

The great progressive Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes also expressed the unanimous opinion of the court "that if a man reasonably believes that he is in immediate danger of death or grievous bodily harm from his assailant he may stand his ground

and that if he kills him he has not succeeded the bounds of lawful self-defense. ... Detached reflection cannot be demanded in the presence of an uplifted knife" (*Brown v. United States*, 1921).

Even among the more restrictive states, such as New York, retreat is not required before using deadly force in the home, to prevent a burglary, robbery, kidnapping, rape or other forcible criminal sexual attack. Thus, whether you are in N.Y. or Fla., and someone attempts to rob you when you are walking down the street, you have no duty to retreat before using deadly force to thwart the robbery.

Anti-gun lobbyists assert that Florida law prevented Mr. Zimmerman from being arrested. This too is false, since he was arrested and taken into custody at the police station.

The relevant Florida law is that a law enforcement agency "may not arrest the person for using force unless it determines that there is probable cause that the force that was used was unlawful" (Florida Statutes Section 776.032). This simply restates the Fourth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, which, by its express language, forbids arrests without probable cause.

It's time for professional demagogues and racists, such as Al Sharpton, to stop their false claims that Florida's self-defense laws are unusual, or that there is anything in those laws that prevents justice from being done in the Zimmerman case.

-- Washington Times, April 2, 2012

Blacks benefited more than others from Florida's Stand Your Ground law

By John Lott

From the Daily Caller:

"African Americans benefit from Florida's 'Stand Your Ground' self-defense law at a rate far out of proportion to their presence in the state's population, despite an assertion by Attorney General Eric Holder that repealing 'Stand Your Ground' would help African Americans."

Black Floridians have made about a third of the state's total "Stand Your Ground" claims in homicide cases, a rate nearly double the black percentage of Florida's population. The majority of those claims have been successful, a success rate that exceeds that for Florida whites. . . .

But approximately one third of Florida "Stand Your Ground" claims in fatal cases have been made by black defendants, and they have used the defense successfully 55 percent of the time, at the same rate as the population at large and at a higher rate than white defendants, according to a Daily Caller analysis of a database maintained by the Tampa Bay Times. Additionally, the majority of victims in Florida "Stand Your Ground" cases have been white.

African Americans used "Stand Your Ground" defenses at nearly twice the rate of their presence in the Florida population, which was listed at 16.6 percent in 2012.

Holder also makes the claim: "These laws try to fix something that was never broken." It is something that he has a hard time justifying, but he really just asserts the claim and offers no evidence.

-- johnrlott.blogspot.com July 18, 2013

Moore's Law

"Moore's Law" is the observation that over the history of computing hardware, the number of transistors on integrated circuits doubles approximately every two years. It is named after George Moore, the Intel computer engineer who first noticed the trend in 1965. "Moore's Law" renders last year's computer gadgets defunct fairly rapidly, requiring consumers to buy new gadgets and keeping Wall Street awash in profits. This trend also makes next year's tech devices breathtakingly small and powerful compared to today's. This exponential growth in computing power ultimately achieves what is called "Singularity", a time when computers

eventually outsmart humans. Some people say that Singularity was achieved over a dozen years ago, and others say it is a hypothetical event that won't happen for decades. One thing is for sure: under "Moore's Law" computers will never stop becoming more powerful.

-- The Sovereign, June 2013

Journal of American Physicians and Surgeons: Guns Do Not Cause Crime, People Do

In the fall edition of the Journal of American Physicians and Surgeons, Jane M. Orient, M.D., takes apart the long standing gun control arguments of many medical groups to show that guns do not cause crime, people do. ("Gun Violence" as a Public Health Issue: A Physician's Response)

Orient looks at "advocacy campaigns" for "treating gun violence" that have been sponsored by the American Medical Association (AMA) and the American College of Physicians (ACP) and says these groups have fashioned gun violence as a "health problem" rather than a "crime problem." In so doing, they have avoided the real causes of violence and to pursue federal funding for research from an advocacy perspective.

According to Orient, in many cases these and other medical groups have missed the real causes behind crime because their advocacy often comes with "a political agenda" attached.

Orient shows how this "public health approach" included supporting more gun control laws following the heinous crime at Sandy Hook Elementary, although "the latest and purportedly best study provides no support to the call for more restrictive gun laws as a means to prevent homicide."

She also examines how various medical groups frame gun violence in terms of a safety issue. She focuses especially on the way such groups and their allies suggest the government is more worried about motor-vehicle safety than gun safety.

But Orient shows that such claims betray a misunderstanding of causal factors behind crime: "A major fallacy in the analogy between motor-vehicle crashes and shootings is that crashes are almost always accidental, and shootings are almost always intentional. Thus, in the former, the safety characteristics of cars and

roads are highly pertinent, whereas in the latter the issue is why a shooter decides to pull the trigger."

Orient argues that the design of the car--including things like center of gravity in SUVs--are very important because the cause of a crash is often external to the driver. But when it comes to crime, it is the person rather than the gun who is to blame. In other words, the cause is internal. Thus, medical groups take the wrong approach when they place emphasis on "the guns themselves" instead of on "factors related to violent behavior, apart from mental illness."

She bolsters this point by showing there is no real reduction in violent crime in certain countries where there has long been higher levels of gun control than in the U.S.

For example, Canada has had "strictly regulated handguns for more than a century" and required the registration of all handguns "since 1934." Yet, although the northern-most U.S. states adjoining Canada "have a three to ten-fold higher prevalence of handgun ownership... no consistent differences were observed in violent homicide rates."

In other words, in the absence of guns Canadians prone to violence used other lethal means.

A 2007 study in the Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy made this same point based on suicide numbers in England following gun bans there. According to the study, while gun control advocates were celebrating a drop in the number of firearms used in suicides, they overlooked the fact that suicides among "English youth" actually rose as a growing number of people simply found other ways to kill themselves.

The gun is not the culprit. Rather, the person intent on assaulting or killing another person is the culprit.

Guns do not cause crime, people do.

Orient's concludes that, "Organized medicine's decades-long campaign to have firearm-related fatalities considered as a public health rather than a criminal justice issue is not evidence-based. Its reliance on weak, even tainted evidence and spurious reasoning, and its attempts to suppress or discredit contrary evidence, is consistent with a political agenda of incremental civilian disarmament."

-- AWR Hawkins, www.breitbart.com September. 4, 2013

CFR adds "innovation" twist to gun control

By Humberto Fontova

This month the Council on Foreign Relations released a "*Policy Innovation Memorandum*" titled "*A Strategy to Reduce Gun Trafficking and Violence in the America's*." The "innovation" was authored by CFR Senior Fellow for Latin American Studies Julia F. Sweig.

According to Ms Sweig the "policy" that needs "innovation" is U.S. gun laws. Why?

In brief: because too many people are shooting each other in *Latin America*. "The flow of high-powered weaponry from the United States to Latin America and the Caribbean exacerbates soaring rates of gun-related violence in the region," asserts her "Innovation Memorandum."

"Although recent federal gun control measures have run aground on congressional opposition," laments Ms Sweig, "...though the Senate rejected measures to expand background checks on firearms sales, reinstate a federal assault-weapons ban, and make straw purchasing a federal crime, the Obama administration can still take executive action to reduce the availability and trafficking of assault weapons and ammunition in the Americas...."

In brief: to foil Latin American criminals the CFR urges the U.S. president to use every ounce of his executive power to further gut the constitutional self-defense rights of U.S. citizens. He needs to roll up his sleeves and ram through regulations that have been repeatedly thwarted by U.S. law-makers.

The White House should back state and local legislation, in Maryland and Connecticut, which ban the sale of assault rifles (actually: semi-automatic deer-hunting rifles) and high-capacity magazines, broaden existing background check requirements for firearms purchases, and modernize gun-owner registries by requiring, among others, *that buyers submit their fingerprints when applying for a gun license*."

All of the above to show our "Latino" neighbors "that United States can be a legitimate partner in "combating transnational crime" and to "fulfill our shared responsibility for regional security."

Much of Zweig's career consists of lobbying for the interests of Castro's Cuba's, historically (and still)

the top benefactor of Latin America's most murderous gun-runners, drug-gangs and terrorists, not to mention the regime that came closest to igniting a worldwide nuclear war.

Zweig's promotional services for the Castro regime reached a level where the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency top Cuba spycatcher, Chris Simmons (now retired), named her a Cuban "Agent of Influence."

-- "Cuban Agent of Influence Wants American Gun-Owners Fingerprinted" www.townhall.com Aug 30, 2013

Humberto Fontova holds an M.A. in Latin American Studies from Tulane University and is the author of four books including his latest, The Longest Romance; The Mainstream Media and Fidel Castro. For video clips of his TV and college speaking appearances please visit www.hfontova.com

Presidential War Powers: the Constitutional Answer

By Tom Wood

Ever since the Korean War the war power has been interpreted to mean, "The President has the power to initiate hostilities without consulting Congress."

But what the framers meant by Article II, Section 2 of the Constitution was that once war has been declared [by Congress], it was the President's responsibility as commander-in-chief to direct the war. Alexander Hamilton said that the president, although lacking the power to declare war, would have "the direction of war when authorized or begun." The president acting alone was authorized only to repel sudden attacks (hence the decision to withhold from him only the power to "declare" war, not to "make" war, which was thought to be a necessary emergency power in case of foreign attack).

At the Constitutional Convention, the delegates disclaimed any intention to model the American executive after the British monarchy. James Wilson, for example, remarked that the powers of the British king did not constitute "a proper guide in defining the executive powers. Some of these prerogatives were of a Legislative nature. Among others that of war & peace."

To repose such authority [the power to declare war] in the legislative rather than the executive branch of government was a deliberate

and dramatic break with the British model of government, as well as with that of other nations, where the executive branch (in effect, the monarch) possessed the exclusive right to declare war. The Framers of the Constitution believed that history testified to the executive's penchant for war. As James Madison wrote to Thomas Jefferson, "The constitution supposes, what the History of all Governments demonstrates, that the Executive is the branch of power most interested in war, and most prone to it. It has accordingly with studied care vested the question of war in the Legislature." Madison even proposed excluding the president from the negotiation of peace treaties, on the grounds that he might obstruct a settlement out of a desire to derive "power and importance from a state of war."

James Wilson assured the Pennsylvania Ratifying Convention, "This system will not hurry us into war; it is calculated to guard against it. It will not be in the power of a single man, or a single body of men, to involve us in such distress; for the important power of declaring war is vested in the legislature at large: this declaration must be made with the concurrence of the House of Representatives: from this circumstance we may draw a certain conclusion that nothing but our interest can draw us into war."

In Federalist #69, Alexander Hamilton explained that the president's authority "would be nominally the same with that of the King of Great Britain, but in substance much inferior to it. It would amount to nothing more than the supreme command and direction of the military and naval forces, as first general and admiral of the confederacy; while that of the British king extends to the declaring of war, and to the raising and regulating of fleets and armies; all which by the constitution under consideration would appertain to the Legislature."

According to John Bassett Moore, who occupied the first professorship of international law at Columbia University, "There can hardly be room for doubt that the framers of the constitution, when they vested in Congress the power to declare war, never imagined that they were leaving it to the executive to use the military and naval forces of the United States all over the world for the purpose of actually coercing other nations, occupying their territory, and killing

In the beginning of change the patriot is a scarce man, brave, hated and scorned. When his cause succeeds, however, the timid join him, for then it costs nothing to be a patriot. – Mark Twain

their soldiers and citizens, all according to his own notions of the fitness of things, as long as he refrained from calling his action war or persisted in calling it peace."

In conformity with this understanding, George Washington's operations on his own authority against the Indians were confined to defensive measures, conscious as he was that the approval of Congress would be necessary for anything further. "The Constitution vests the power of declaring war with Congress," he said, "therefore no offensive expedition of importance can be undertaken until after they have deliberated upon the subject, and authorized such a measure."

Would Banning Firearms Reduce Murder and Suicide?

By Don B. Kates and Gary Mauser

From the Introduction: International evidence and comparisons have long been offered as proof of the mantra that more guns mean more deaths and that fewer guns, therefore, mean fewer deaths. Unfortunately, such discussions are all too often been afflicted by misconceptions and factual error and focus on comparisons that are unrepresentative. It may be useful to begin with a few examples. There is a compound assertion that (a) guns are uniquely available in the United States compared with other modern developed nations which is why (b) the U.S. has by far the highest murder rate. Though these assertions have been endlessly repeated, statement (b) is, in fact, false and statement (a) is substantially so.

Since at least 1965, the false assertion that the U.S. has the industrialized world's highest murder rate has been an artifact of politically motivated Soviet minimization designed to hide the true homicide rates. Since well before that date, the Soviet Union possessed extremely stringent gun controls that were effectuated by a police state apparatus providing stringent enforcement. So successful was that regime that few Russian civilians now have firearms and very few murders involve them. Yet, manifest success in keeping its people disarmed did not prevent the Soviet Union from having far and away the highest murder rate in the developed world. In the 1960s and early 1970s the gun-less Soviet Union's murder rate paralleled or generally exceeded those of gun-ridden America. While American rates stabilized and then steeply

declined, however, Russian murder increased so drastically that by the early 1990s the Russian rate was three times higher than that of the U.S. Between 1998-2004 (the latest figure available for Russia), Russian murder rates were nearly four times higher than American rates. Similar murder rates also characterize the Ukraine, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and various other now independent European nations of the former U.S.S.R. Thus, in the U.S. and the former Soviet Union transitioning into current-day Russia, "homicide results suggest that where guns are scarce other weapons are substituted in killings."

From the Conclusion: The burden of proof rests on the proponents of the more guns equal more death and fewer guns equal less death mantra, especially since they argue public policy ought to be based on that mantra. To bear that burden would at the very least require showing that a large number of nations with more guns have more death and that nations that have imposed stringent gun controls have achieved substantial reductions in criminal violence (or suicide). But those correlations are not observed when a large number of nations are compared across the world.

-- Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy, Vol. 30, No. 2, pp. 649-94, Spring 2007

Oath Keepers is Forming Special "Civilization Preservation" Teams

Oath Keepers is instructing its 30,000 members to form up special teams and sub-teams in each Oath Keepers chapter, at the town and county level, modeled loosely on the Special Forces "A Team" model: to be both a potential operational unit for community security and support during crisis, but also, as mission #1, to serve as cadre, to assist in organizing neighborhood watches and veterans halls to provide civil defense, forming County Sheriff Posses, strengthening existing CERT [community emergency response team], volunteer fire, search-and-rescue, reserve deputy systems, etc., and eventually to assist in forming and training town and county militias (established by official act of town and county elected representatives). We want our chapters to organize themselves as a model that we can take to other veterans organizations, such as the VFW, American Legion, Marine Corps League, etc. and help them establish such teams within their veterans halls. And likewise, to serve

as a model and training cadre to help churches, neighborhood watches, and any other civic organization organize.

We are basing this on the Special Forces model, which has a twelve man "A team" of soldiers specially trained [in communications, combat engineering, weapons, field medicine, operations, command] who are to train and lead that community in resistance to oppressive regimes (hence their motto: "De Oppresso Liber"). SF's primary mission is to teach, organize, and lead, rather than to directly fight. They can fight, of course, but they are most dangerous as a force-multiplier by helping an entire community to fight. We will do the same -- be force multipliers to help prepare communities so they can preserve civilization by providing their own security, disaster relief, infrastructure preservation, emergency communications, strategic food reserve, and medical care....

When the crap hits the fan, you need well-trained people around you who can help you get through. Like Kevin Reeve of Onpoint Tactical says: "training trumps gear. And community trumps both training and gear." You can't know it all, or do it all, and you have to sleep sometime. So build a team, build community, and preserve civilization.

It starts with you, your family, your small circle of most trusted friends, then your neighborhood, your church, your veterans halls in your town, the Sheriff's posse, the local search and rescue, volunteer fire, etc., and then out to your county and state.

-- oathkeepers.org October 1, 2013

Matchstick-sized sensor can record your private chats

To have a private chat in the NSA era, you go outdoors. Phones, the internet, email and your office can all be compromised with ease. But even that whispered conversation in the park may no longer be safe from prying ears.

Carrying out covert audio surveillance currently requires parabolic microphones, which look like large, clear salad bowls and need a direct, unobstructed view of the subject. Hardly 007 territory.

Now, a Dutch acoustics firm, Microflown Technologies, has developed a matchstick-sized sensor that can pinpoint and record a target's conversations from a distance.

Known as an acoustic vector sensor, Microflown's sensor measures the movement of air,

disturbed by sound waves, to almost instantly locate where a sound originated. It can then identify the noise and, if required, transmit it live to waiting ears.

The military has been using a version of the sensor to track and identify multiple distant jets, mortar rounds and sniper rifles in any environment.

Earlier this year, Microflown discovered by chance that the device can hear, record or stream an ordinary conversation from as far away as 20 metres, says Hans-Elias de Bree, the firm's co-founder. Signal-processing software filters out unwanted noise like wind or traffic commotion. Work is now underway to increase the range.

Given a battery and a tiny antenna, the sensor could be attached to traffic lights, a shrub or park bench. Such systems can be teamed with surveillance cameras. Detecting a shout or a gunshot, the sensor can direct the camera to the precise location of trouble, the way our ears work with our eyes. It can then start recording everything that is being said in that location.

A number of countries are now testing the matchstick sensor attached to drones and crewed vehicles, says de Bree. He foresees governments placing them on small dirigibles that tail suspects or hover over political rallies.

"Not only could this work, it has worked," says Ron Barrett-Gonzalez at the University of Kansas. He has helped boost the sensor's range by 28 per cent to more than 25 metres. It will be possible to record a parade of people on a busy sidewalk all day using a camera and acoustic sensor, and tune into each conversation or voice, live or via stored files, he says.

Security technologist Bruce Schneier says this new capability is unwelcome – particularly given the recent claims about the NSA's success at tapping into our private lives. "It's not just this one technology that's the problem," Schneier says. "It's the mic plus the drones, plus the signal processing, plus voice recognition."

-- newscientist.com 26 Sept. 2013

What Should You Do if You're Threatened by a Mass Murderer?

by Jim Powell

On July 23, 2007, two men invaded the Connecticut home of Dr. William Petit Jr., his wife and their 11 and 17 year-old daughters. There

wasn't a gun in the house that could have been used to ward off the attackers. They savagely beat Dr. Petit and then left him to focus on the others. He managed to call 911. The attackers killed his wife and daughters, then the place was torched.

Incredibly, police who arrived at the scene were said to have stood around outside for about 25 minutes. The men tried to escape, and police caught them outside.

Dr. Petit wanted to know why the police didn't try to stop the killing, but police and town officials declined to answer questions from David Heilbroner and Kate Davis, who produced *The Cheshire Murders*, a documentary that HBO aired in July. The Associated Press reported, "Connecticut Cops Still Mum On '07 Home Invasion Response."

This could have been a matter of incompetence or cowardice. It could also have been a matter of obsolete police procedure. Officers might have been ordered not to do anything until a police supervisor arrived. Or they might have been ordered to wait until a SWAT (Special Weapons And Tactics) team was on the scene.

The point in this article isn't to criticize police. The point is that if you're threatened by a killer, you're on your own, and you must take initiative to protect yourself. There's a high probability that police cannot stop the killer in time to save you.

In an effort to help save more lives, Ron Borsch, lead trainer at the South East Area Law Enforcement (SEALE) Training Academy, Bedford, Ohio, identified approximately 150 cases of what he called rapid mass murder attempts in the U.S. since 1975. He defined this to mean more than four people murdered in 20 minutes at the same place.

"Of the pre-Columbine rapid mass murders [in 1999]," he explained, "the average killing time was 11 minutes. Among the known times of post-Columbine rapid mass murders, the average time was down to 8 minutes. Now the average killing time is only about 6 minutes."

Borsch reported:

"Although the overall murder rate declined by about 50 percent since 1980, the number of rapid mass murders has nearly quadrupled since Columbine.

"These killers tend to be cowards, because they generally favor gun-free zones where few, if any people, are likely to resist their attacks with force.

*62 percent of rapid mass murder attempts are stopped by civilians on-site— not police based off-site.

We must always be aware of what's going on around us, and we must take initiative to protect ourselves and our loved ones in unexpected circumstances.

Even if you're fortunate to live in a place with a great police department, and you call 911, you're still substantially on your own during a killing time.

Gun control is no answer, since Connecticut already had strict gun control laws and special restrictions on assault weapons.

It seems that the only credible solution is to have each school, business or other entity assume responsibility for maintaining its own security. Police don't have a budget big enough to protect everybody all the time. The surest way to gain comprehensive protection is to have trained, armed people already on-site.

In their survey of all rapid mass murder cases from 2000 to 2010, Blair, Nichols, Burns and Curnutt affirm that self-help is vital. They reported, "In 30 percent of the attacks stopped before police arrived, the victims took action to stop the shooter themselves either by physically subduing the attacker (81 percent) or by shooting him with their own personal weapon (19 percent). These data clearly show that it is possible to defend yourself successfully in these events even if you are unarmed."

NOTE: An armed civilian who stops a killer must be extremely cautious when police officers arrive, because they know little, if anything, about what happened. They don't know who the good guys and bad guys are.

The best advice is to drop your gun and open your hands to show you don't have anything. Don't make any sudden movements.

Jim Powell is a senior fellow at the Cato Institute.

-- Forbes.com September 4, 2013

National gun registry gets head start in Maryland

By Emily Miller

Gun owners place a high value on their privacy. Anti-gun politicians realize this and are hoping they can use the prospect of entering their names into a gun registry to scare Americans away from buying a firearm.

Over the weekend, Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley and the Maryland State Police released the

confidential information of people applying for firearms purchases to five massive state agencies. The stated purpose, according to a police statement, was to speed up the processing of a backlog of 39,000 applications.

The backlog was created by Mr. O'Malley's radical new gun-control laws that kick in on Oct. 1, requiring anyone who wants to buy a handgun to submit to fingerprinting, licensing and the completion of a four-hour training course. This will be just like the mandatory course the District of Columbia did away with last year after concluding it was entirely unnecessary.

Citizens of states without such restrictions may wonder why the police are involved at all in the purchase of a firearm. Mr. O'Malley, a Democrat with ambitions for higher office, does not allow federally licensed dealers to have direct contact with the FBI's National Instant Background Check System. Maryland demands that a dealer go through the state police for the background check before releasing a gun.

However, what is supposed to be a seven-day process has stretched much longer. Mr. O'Malley refuses to rectify the situation by allowing the dealers to conduct the background checks themselves. Apparently, he will do anything to make it harder to get a gun.

Sen. John Barrasso, Wyoming Republican, offered an amendment in April to President Obama's gun-control legislation that would have blocked the government from publicly releasing any information about gun owners. Mr. Barrasso's amendment got 67 votes and passed the upper chamber.

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid pulled the base bill, so Mr. Barrasso's legislation never went to the House. Since then, several states have passed laws prohibiting the public release of gun owners' personal information.

The larger issue is how much Americans can trust the federal government with registration lists of gun owners. Our Founding Fathers created the Second Amendment

specifically so that an armed civilian populace could protect the nation from a tyranny.

When the government knows the whereabouts of every single gun in the country, the deterrence of an armed citizenry as a counterweight to overbearing authority is removed, and the possibility of confiscation becomes more likely.

Maryland gun owners are justified in their anger about their personal information being disseminated to a variety of state bureaucratic databases. Americans cannot trust their government with their personal information and ought to be vigilant about demanding answers when their privacy is compromised.

-- washingtontimes.com Sept. 11, 2013

Waking a Sleeping Giant in Colorado

By John R. Lott Jr.

Two weeks ago, the Washington Post declared the recall elections of two powerful state senators in Colorado a national "referendum on guns." Indeed, the defeat of state-senate president John Morse and fellow state senator Angela Giron will cause some Democrats to rethink their push on gun control.

Both state-senate districts were overwhelmingly Democratic. In 2012, President Obama carried Morse's district by 21 percentage points and Giron's by 19 points.

Not only did getting a recall on the ballot require signatures amounting to 25 percent of all the votes in the previous election, but recall proponents were outspent by the groups backed by billionaire Mayor Bloomberg that went in earlier with ads to discourage signature gathering.

By the last filing for the recall, on August 29, Morse had raised \$658,230 and Giron \$825,400. While the NRA had donated \$361,700, just two billionaires, Bloomberg and Eli Broad, donated a total of \$600,000 between them. Left-wing organizations such as the Daily Kos and MoveOn.org continually bombarded their members with requests for money. Of the \$3.5 million spent on the recall election,

almost \$3 million came from its opponents.

Despite all that, the two Democratic state senators were decisively defeated, in the first recalls of legislators in Colorado history.

As part of its gun-control push, the Obama administration made the extremely unusual move of lobbying Colorado's governor and its state legislators. If they could show that strict gun control could be passed in a western state such as Colorado, the administration thought, they could get it passed anyplace. The Colorado bills, like the ones from Connecticut to New York to Maryland to California, had one central goal: to reduce gun ownership by making it costly to own guns.

In Colorado, one new law charges people a transfer fee whenever they obtain a gun. Democrats voted down Republican amendments that would have exempted people below the poverty level from paying it. How many other taxes or fees would Democrats refuse to exempt the poor from paying?

The issue that most divides conservatives and liberals is not taxes, not abortion, but gun control. Liberals trust government to make decisions, while conservatives tend to trust individuals. Letting people possess weapons is the ultimate form of trust in individuals. Democrats also know that gun ownership and familiarity with firearms go a long way toward determining how people feel about gun control. Democrats may believe that gun control enhances safety, but they also believe that it will weaken Republicans and conservatism in the long run.

-- nationalreview.com Sept. 11, 2013

Our country possesses "the advantage of being armed, which Americans possess over the people of almost every other nation... [where] the governments are afraid to trust the people with arms." — James Madison (1751-1836) 4th President of the United States, won the name "father of the Constitution" and was the chief proponent of the Bill of Rights.

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